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SAFEGUARDING AMERICA

SPEECH

OF

HON. WARREN G. HARDING

OF OHIO

IN THE

SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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SPEECH

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HON. WARREN G. HARDING,

OF OHIO.

SAFEGUARDING AMERICA.

Mr. HARDING. Mr. President, if it were not for seeming indifference in an hour of imperiled nationality, I believe I should be content to rest my expression on the pending treaty wholly to the report of the Committee on Foreign Relations. I say this with propriety, I think, because I had no part in its writing, though I was a participant in the conclusions reached. My judgment is that it is one of the American documents well worthy of preservation.

Mr. President, every day of discussion, presidential utterances included, and every hour of study combine to persuade me that the league of nations venture in the form in which the covenant has been negotiated, is one of peril to the Republic. To accept it unaltered would be a betrayal of America. It is not for me to consider constitutional inhibitions. There is probably nothing to prevent a nation undertaking self-destruction by indirection or otherwise if the treaty-making powers are in accord about the desirability of such a course. Nor is it for me to discuss the finer points involved in international law and diplomatic niceties, because once the league is established it becomes the maker of international law and diplomacy ends in league autocracy.

Such impressions as I wish to offer are the very simple ones of an American who is jealous of the Republic's nationality and fears paralysis in that internationality which is the league's loftiest aim. Submerged nationality and supreme internationality are more to be expected than the proclaimed permanency of peace, which first caught the sympathy and support of a peace-loving world.

Mr. President, I know the natural aspirations of civilized humanity and share them. I know how the heart of the world, torn and bleeding and anguished and palpitant in the cataclysmal war, throbs in hunger for assured tranquillity. I pity him who has not felt the yearnings within his own breast. No real American is so bereft of feeling. There is no monopoly of the love of peace, and there is no exclusiveness in concern for humanity's sake. Neither is there a limited circle of those who act in patriotic devotion nor restricted groups in loving our common country. I say these perfectly obvious things because it is time to clear up some mistaken impressions. The proponents of the Wilsonian league of nations have no more claim to an exclusive desire for the peace of our country and the world than the opponents of this league have exclusive claim to patriotic devotion to our own Nation. And the considerable numbers who are grieving that there is involved in the treaty-making power a portion of the Senate which is impelled by

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partisan bias ought to revise their judgment, because it is as unfair and uncomplimentary to one side as the other and challenges the wisdom of popular government. However, if disagreement with the Executive, now that the war is won, is to invite the charge of narrow partisanship, I welcome it and am content to let it go at that.

It was the truth, last year, two years ago, three and four years ago, the people of this country were heedlessly and overwhelmingly for a league of nations, or a society of nations, or a world court, or some international association which should develop a fraternity of action among civilized peoples and save humanity not only from the sorrows and sufferings like those which came with the war now ended, but from the involvements of which we are not yet emerged. Many leaders of the party represented on this side of the Chamber were conspicuous in its advocacy, and thousands less notable joined the chorus. Among the latter I joined in writing a favoring declaration in the platform of the Republican Party in Ohio, which I think fairly voiced the aspirations of the people of that State. In the popular thought was the wish to abolish war and promote peace and make justice supreme, and it was believed that the world, war wearied and drenched with the blood of millions of devoted nationalists, would be ready for the committal. Our people were thinking of the thing desired, and never pondered the method or the cost of its making. Nobody stopped to think of the involvements then. We are only learning them now.

It would have been well to have counseled with one another before the covenant was fashioned. The people voted such a preference most emphatically last November. Most people thought there would be counseling, and it ought to have been done. When the armistice brought humanity's greatest sigh of relief since fellowship engirdled the earth, it was the common thought that sympathy would inspire and justice would impel and safety would demand some created agency of the conscience of the world that should contribute to the furtherance of peace and maintained tranquillity. But the immediate task was the settlement of the war suspended by the armistice. The manifest yearning was for recovery from madness and destruction and waste and disorder, and the instincts of self-preservation called for speedy restoration. No one doubted that the measureless cost and unspeakable suffering would awaken the consciences of nations to take stock of their relationships and readjust them to guard against recurrent horrors. But the pressing call was for peace, peace among the belligerent powers, peace for convalescence, peace for deliberation, peace for that understanding which is the first essential in undertaking a world-wide covenant which mankind had never effected heretofore.

No one can doubt the advantageous position of this Republic when the armistice was signed. We had proven our unselfishness. We alone had not won the war, but our entrance into the conflict in April, 1917, saved the waning morale of allied nations which bore the brunt of German attack, and our first expeditionary forces in the summer of 1917 revived the drooping spirits of the fighting forces of France and England, and in 1918 the sons of this Republic turned the sweeping tide of battle backward. It is not unseemly to say our forces were an absolutely

essential factor in the winning, though our 2,000,000 of fighting and irresistible Americans were only a partial expression of our resources and our resolution that Germany and her allies must be brought to terms. It is a glorious record which calls for no recital here. I am trying only to call to mind our advantageous position—the gratitude of the powers with whom we were associated, the belated realization and respect of the Central Powers, the tardy awakening of Germany, who learned the lesson that Americans could and would fight, and the world's understanding of our unselfishness in the defense of our national rights.

The loftiness of our position was correctly and creditably appraised, notwithstanding the excessive proclamation of democracy and humanity. The latter was mainly for home consumption. It may be taken as one of the inevitable things in popular government, it was distinctly a symptom of our neglect of the American spirit. Those who stop to analyze know, of course, that if the German assault had been aimed at the world's democracy—our defense of democracy ought to have answered with every American gun when Belgium was invaded. And the same analytical thought must have persuaded the thinking American that if it was our duty to make war for humanity's sake, duty called loudly above the horrified exclamation of the world when the *Lusitania* was sunk without pity for dying humanity on her unsuspecting decks. I am not indulging in belated complaint, because I knew the tremendous seriousness of plunging the Republic in war, and I knew then our unreadiness of spirit for such a committal. The point I am aiming at is to clarify our purpose in entering the war in order to emphasize our favorable position when it came to an end. The everlasting truth is that we were lashed by German ruthlessness to a defense of our national rights, and we did defend them, until Germany's power for ruthlessness has been destroyed beyond recovery for generations to come. We defended only our rights, and we know now, if we did not realize before, that the nation which does not defend its national rights does not deserve to survive. We did not ask more, except to help in righteous restoration, and the world correctly appraised the unselfishness which marked our efforts.

It was a very simple course to have taken. Ours was a commanding voice in the adjustments of peace, willingly and gladly heeded. It was ours to pass judgment on the terms of peace and speed their conclusion. I must confess, Senators, I could find no fault with the President going to the peace table. The world had never seen before such an opportunity for service, and I thought it fitting that the first citizen of the Republic should go and utter the unbiased advice of America amid the embitterments and prejudices that had grown out of twenty centuries of European conflict. I do not share the criticism that he invited no Members of this body, which must approve every treaty to which the Republic is committed. I do complain that in this most extraordinary and unparalleled wreck in the wake of world-wide war he consented to counsel and advise with none who have sworn duties to perform, and devoted, essentially alone, his talents and his supreme influence to reformations and restitutions, and the establishments of governments and the realizations of ambitions and the fulfillment of dreams which human struggles and battling peoples and

heroic sacrifices have not effected since the world began, and never will be realized until that millennial day that marks the beginning of heaven on earth. The situation presented intensely practical problems, and he clung mainly to lofty theories.

Sometimes I think a very capable writer of history is very much spoiled for the making of it. I can recall now my reverent regard for Julius Cæsar when I struggled with his recital of the wars in Gaul. It required a wider reading before I realized that the great commoner of that day was making history and recording it for the effect it might and did have south of the Rubicon. It is easy to understand the perfectly natural and laudable ambition to do the superlative thing which history is waiting to record, which superlative thing was in the historian's mind, but it needed penetrating vision to meet the pressing, practical problems which were awaiting solution, by very practical men.

One can conceive the idealist who is blind to the bald realities of secret covenants and selfish bartering incident to the alliances wrought amid the anxieties and necessities of so stupendous a war. Nations were battling for their very existence, and they made pledges with little reckoning of the future. It was assumed our Government knew the details, but the assumption was a mistaken one. The President frankly said he did not know. Merely fighting in our own defense, it was excusable for us not to know, for we should have given to our utmost of lives and treasure regardless of the aftermath. But in joining the struggle professedly for democracy's sake, we ought to have had some forecast of democracy's fate in the pregnant aftermath. More, to meddle effectively in the affairs of the world, we ought to have known the world's promises. Herein lies the weakness of our whole part at the peace table.

The war had its inception in German ambition, expanded domain, if not world domination, all conceived in drunkenness with power. It was met in self-defense—righteous self-defense—but there was inevitable consideration of the spoils of victory. They became the inspiration and considerations of alliances, and there were understandings, written and unwritten. We should be blind not to recognize the necessity and naturalness of it. The pity is that we did not recognize the evident truth and speak with the confident voice of justice, and hold ourselves aloof from any committal which savored of unrighteousness. If Europe, in the stress of war or out of it, will barter in territories and peoples, we can not hinder, but we need not approve and surely we must not guarantee.

Whether the President knew the details of negotiated selfishness while the war was raging, it was inevitable that he soon learned when he made his triumphant landing on the friendly soil of France. It was not then too late to hold aloof. We were seeking only peace. We sought no territory, no mandatory, no reparation—nothing was asked. Our unselfishness was genuine, to the everlasting honor of this Republic. But the glory of the league of nations—an appealing conception—filled the American commission's vision, while distinctly American interests—aye, sacred American interests—were ignored and forgotten in a new and consuming concern for the world.

Empires and sovereign States, autocratic, imperial, or democratic, had fought and sacrificed and bargained and cove-

wanted—and we had fought with them—and they craved peace and we craved peace. But they wanted annexations and extensions and creations, and they wanted this Republic, with its resources—with its wealth of men and materials—to guarantee the changes they had wrought, and wanted the United States of America in their unselfishness to guarantee in perpetuity the selfishness of the Old World.

They had nothing to offer us but the phantasmal thing, taking the elusory shape of the image of peace, a promise deeply appealing to the aspirations of ourselves and the world, for tranquillity and the banishment of war. And we bargained for it, and then they fashioned it into a reality, suited to serve Europe and the Orient as the seal of righteousness on all to which the allied powers had agreed.

Mr. President, I grant the worthiness, the loftiness of the ideal when we look above and beyond the immorality which it cloaks. One must concede the good which is aimed at. No one who is sincere can question the desirability of closer fraternity among the nations of the earth. No thoughtful citizen of any country will dispute the need of the clarification and codification of international law. Such a thing might have saved us from involvement in the European war, unless Germany was madly determined to effect her own destruction.

International arbitration and a world court for justiciable disputes appeal to all who think justice is sustained in reason rather than in armed dispute. The establishment of an agency for the revelation of the moral judgment of the world can never be amiss. These things might well have come out of the combined consciences of the nations awakened to new ideals amid the sufferings of war, and they will yet come. But it does not require a supergovernment to effect them, nor the surrender of nationality and independence of action to sanction them.

It is my deliberate conviction that the league of nations covenant, as negotiated at Paris and signed at Versailles, either creates a supergovernment of the nations which enter it or it will prove the colossal disappointment of the ages. Though it would be vastly more serious as the former, I can not believe this Republic ought to sanction it in either case. Why proclaim a promise that will embitter the world's disappointment?

Let us note, first, the probability of disappointment. Does it effect disarmament? The member nations decide for themselves the necessary size of their armed forces, which are not to be increased except with the league's approval. Of course there is to be studied recommendation for reduction, but any two powers in concerted action may reject the entire program. Who has heard of a proposal to diminish the great British Navy, which holds Great Britain undisputed mistress of the world's seas? Few will question Great Britain's wisdom in her well-known attitude. Surely no British subject will question it. She has an empire to defend and a commerce to guard, without which England's glory is at an end.

Only a few days ago the cabled news told us that France will maintain a larger army than that Republic possessed when she entered the World War. Doubtless France's security demands it, in spite of the negotiated alliance which calls the United States and Great Britain to her aid in case of a renewed German assault. We know little about Japan, but we do know

that Japan may fix her own limitations as to army and navy, "taking into account geographical conditions and national safety," until under this treaty we give our sons and our resources to the enforcement of international agreements by common action under articles 8 and 10.

Is disarmament looming as a hope realized? Look for an instant at home. With the league confidently expected, with all its blessings of peace, limited only by "interpretations," we are contemplating an army of a half a million, seven times our previous establishment in peace, and the men, in Congress or out, who would cut our program for an expanded navy are few and far between. More, the man who would suggest it would be unmindful of our security. Verily, he who sees world disarmament in this league covenant has a faith which surpasses understanding.

Will nations arbitrate their differences under the league covenant? They will if both parties to the dispute are agreed, and they can do that without it. Under the covenant one party may decline, then the council takes the case, and we have recently come to know the recommendations of the council constitute its judgment only as to a "moral" obligation.

We have heard much lately about "moral" obligations. When a thing is covenanted it is difficult for me to distinguish between moral and legal obligation. For this Republic either or both ought to be solemnly binding. The nation which ignores either is losing the conscience which is essential to self-respect and respect among nations. It was Germany's contempt for a "scrap of paper" that made her an outcast in the eyes of the civilized world.

There has been a curious conflict of meaning in the use of the word "moral." When Senators, speaking in this Chamber in defense of the league covenant, found opposition developing to the powers conveyed in article 10, they hastened to say the council's call to war, armed or economic, in defense of any member was not binding—"only a moral obligation." I have heard the term quoted again and again and in the recorded conference between members of the Foreign Relations Committee and the President it was declared by the President that we were not bound to go to war on recommendation of the council, that there was "only a moral obligation," on which we should have to pass judgment for ourselves. Later on, in the record of the meeting, the President emphatically declared a moral obligation the most binding of all. Let every man make the distinction that he prefers. A contract is a contract, a covenant is a covenant, and if this Republic does not mean to do as it promises, it has no business to make the promise.

There is no language in the covenant more plain than article 10. Either it means what it says, and obligates the member nations to go to war in defense of a member nation, or it means nothing at all. If it leaves any member nation free to exercise its own judgment as to the merits of any attack, it does not guarantee the territorial integrity or peace of any nation. It is worse than phantom: it is the mirage that lures nations thirsting for peace to the very desert of cruel destruction. The pity of it is that no reservation will cure the ill. Without the power which is clearly expressed, "the league is a rope of sand," as the Senator from Connecticut described it, and with the power estab-

lished, as it must be to make the league effective, we have surrendered our own freedom of action to a council whose members will represent the prejudices, ambitions, hatreds, and jealousies of the Old World, or to the assembly, where we are outvoted 6 to 1 by Great Britain and her colonies, and we still remain a party to the racial, geographical, and inherited enmities of Europe and the Orient.

Many have written me, and Senators have spoken and the President has argued, that we are no longer isolated from the Old World, that we have a duty to humanity, and we can not escape our manifest duty to world civilization. It is urged that we struck down the barriers when we sent the sons of the Republic to war, and there can be no withdrawal now. One can not dispute our ever-widening influence; none would narrow it. It began when we unsheathed the sword literally in behalf of humanity for the first time in the world. That was when we went to war to liberate Cuba and expanded to the Philippines. It is easy to recall the outcry against imperialism then by the very adherents of world sponsorship to-day—aye, by those who only three years ago would have furled the flag there, and promise it now, after our contribution to one defenseless people's progress unmatched in all history.

Ours is truly an expanded influence and a world interest, but there is yet for us a splendid isolation. The sons of America, 2,000,000 of them, crossed the seas in spite of submarine ruthlessness and every danger Germany could devise, and 2,000,000 more were ready, and 5,000,000 more would have prepared if needed, and they heroically fought and effectively taught arrogant Germany to respect American rights and left a wholesome impress on the remainder of the world. The soldiers have in the main returned, and, having accomplished our righteous purpose, it was vastly more easy to have severed our involvement than it was to bring the boys home and turn to the pursuits of peace again. The people of this Republic were not concerned with governing the universe. Their interests, their hearts, their hopes, their ambitions, their weal or woe—all of these are in the United States of America. We wanted nothing abroad but respect for our just rights, and that we mean to have, in peace or war, no matter who threatens.

It would have been so easy, if our commission had thought of America first, to have said to the allied powers, "Look here, friends and allies—yes, and to enemies as well—we came over and helped you bring an outlaw to terms, because he trespassed our rights beyond endurance. He is humbled now, and it is yours to restore order and make a just and abiding peace. We want peace, and we want to go to work and replace the waste of war. We will advise, if we can and you wish it, but we are asking nothing, and we will go back home and see to our own affairs. We do not mean to mix in again, unless some bully in making a row infringes our rights and murders our citizens and destroys our lawful property. In that event we will be forced to come back, but we will come more promptly the next time." That would have left a good impression, and we would have been at peace, and so would Europe, months ago.

Mr. President, the first official of our Government is touring the country to invite the people of the Republic, the great mass whose heart is ever right in ultimate decision, to the support of

this untouchable and unamendable and supposedly sacred document. He visited the capital of the State which I have the honor to represent, and was received with the respect becoming his great office, and was applauded, as often happens to appealing speech, of which he is the master. He has spoken and is speaking elsewhere, and the people of our State are reading, in common with the reading people of America. I am not finding fault with the tour, even if it is not wholly purposed to promote the league covenant. One may not assume that it involves a feeling of the political pulse of the country, but if it is, if it is to test popular feeling about putting the Presidency permanently in the hands of one equipped to direct the world aright and at the same time merge this Republic in a super-government of the world, my partisan prejudices would be rejoicing. But the President told the reverent people of Ohio that he had only to report to them—in a broad sense, the people—and it so happens that I, too, as insignificant as my position is, relatively, have to report to the same people, and I want them to have not only the truth but all the truth; not only fine generalities but illuminating details.

Mr. President, the treaty is being expounded by its chief author to the people with vastly more freedom of utterance than this body has known, notwithstanding our solemn responsibility in making it a binding covenant on the part of this Republic. Perhaps it does not matter, because we have before us the treaty itself, and we know what it says, though we do not have all the collateral covenants and do not know all to which we are pledged or to what ratification commits us. Yet we have had the advantage, or disadvantage, if you prefer, of hearing also from others of the peace commission, from experts who drafted many of its articles, and alas, we have heard from many who spoke for those who pleaded for their rights at Paris and who declared they were not heard, no matter what is said now about this being the first consecration of international conscience to the rights of helpless peoples and small nations.

Let me digress for a moment to suggest some of my own impressions gathered during the hearings granted to the American representatives of the aspiring peoples of Europe and Asia and Egypt, whose aspirations and long-deferred hopes of liberty and nationality are alleged to have been safeguarded in this supercreation of humanity. It was futile, of course, for a Senate committee to assume to answer prayers or comply with protest, for our function is not one of negotiation. However, there were citizens crying to be heard, after a denial at the fount of justice in Europe, and we listened. They begged amendment or rejection to save their liberties or to preserve their nationalities or to maintain their homogeneous peoples. Spokesmen for China cried out against the rape of the first great democracy of the Orient, and the plea was eloquent with recited sacrifices and noble assistance in the winning of the war. We uttered our chagrin that the spokesmen for the American conscience—aye, for the "conscience of civilization"—had sanctioned the confessed immorality of the Shantung award to satisfy a secret covenant against which we righteously proclaimed, and we did all we can do to right the wrong.

We heard the Americans speaking for their kinsmen of Greece, our allies in war, protesting the award of Thrace and its Greek

peoples to Bulgaria who fought for German domination. We listened to those who were Croats or Slovenes or Serbs utter their despair over "the rectifications of history" under territorial awards arrived at for Jugo-Slavia, and Americans of Italian origin or ancestry presented the appeals of Italians for unsevered relationship from the motherland. More, Americans who originated in Egypt, with its traditions and ancient civilization, begged that we shall not sanction their transfer from Turkey and Germany to Great Britain, but save them their inherited freedom and their right to becoming aspirations. Hungarians prayed for restored enfranchisement amid the racial inspiration of the Magyars; and the irrepressible advocates of Irish freedom made the plea before the Senate committee which could not be heard at Paris. I have not named them all, but enough to reveal the utter futility, the hopeless impracticability of this Republic attempting to right the cumulative wrongs of history and satisfy the perfectly natural ambitions and aspirations of races and peoples. One can not wave the wand of democracy, even of excessively proclaimed American democracy, and do for Poland in a day or a year or a generation what centuries of sacrifice and warfare and self-determination have not done.

Does any thinking man stop to measure the colossal and endless involvement before which the sublimest unselfishness and most confident altruism must falter? Contemplate for a moment only the mandatory for Armenia. It is very appealing to portray the woes, the outrages, the massacres, the awakening hopes of Armenia, and visualize the doubts and distresses and sacrificed lives while "the Senate waits." I know the appeal that touches the heart of Christian America in its concern and sympathy for Armenia. It easily may be made to seem as if the sympathetic Son of God had turned to the Omnipotent Father to send this twentieth-century defender of the New Testament to succor those stricken believers in the great Trinity. But the big, warning truth is little proclaimed. Our Armies—sons of this Republic, the youths from American homes—are wanted there. Armenia calls and Great Britain is urging, insisting. A hundred thousand soldiers are needed. More American soldiers for Armenia than we heretofore maintained under the flag in any of the years of peace. Answer the call, and we station this American Army at the gateway between Orient and Occident, to become involved in every conflict in the Old World, and our splendid isolation becomes a memory and our boasted peace a mockery. This is not the way to peace. This is the avenue to unending war.

Mr. President, I am not insensible to the sufferings of Armenia, nor am I deaf to the wails forced by the cruelties of barbarity wherever our ideals of civilization are not maintained. But I am thinking of America first. Safety, as well as charity, begins at home. Selfishness? No. It is self-preservation. Measureless as our resources are, large as our man power is, and chivalrous as our purposes may be, we are not strong enough to assume sponsorship for all the oppressed of the world. No people, no nation is strong enough for such a supreme responsibility. We in America have the Republic to preserve. And in this very program of meddlesome assumption, in some instances bordering on presumption, we are endangering our own Republic. It is not

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alone the abandonment of security, so much warned against by the founding fathers, which suggests alarm. I am thinking of divided citizenship at home that must attend our attempted reorganization of the world.

Turn back for a moment to the appealing citizens who appeared before the Foreign Relations Committee in prayer or protest. They fairly represented a large proportion of American citizenship. We have no racial entity in this Republic. We are polyglot of tongue, which generations will not wholly change. The involvement in the World War found us divided in spirit. The founding fathers were eager to share their freedom and speed development of our incalculable resources, and they asked the world to come, and the world did come—the oppressed, the adventurous, the industrious; but there was neglected consecration of citizenship.

In the travail of war the American soul was born, and we have preached and practiced Americanization ever since, and we mean to go on and make this Republic American in fact as well as in name. No republic can endure half loyal and half disloyal; no citizenship is of permanent value whose heart is not in America. I had thought the war worth all it cost, in spite of its unutterable expenditure in lives and treasure, to have found ourselves. It was an inspiration to find the adopted sons of the Republic consecrated to the common cause. Yet, sirs, the unhappy aftermath is resurrecting the old lines of divided citizenship. We are restoring hyphenism under internationalism.

One can not complain at the revealment, but I am lamenting the cause. It is all directly traceable to our assumption of world sponsorship. One can little blame the American of Italian origin for being concerned about the affairs of those bound by ties of blood, or find fault with the American of Greek origin for deep feelings about the fate of those of kin in Thrace, or criticize the American son of the old sod who finds in his heart an undying echo of the Irish cry for freedom. Instead of effacing the native interest, instead of merging the inherited soul in exclusive Americanism, we have already embarked on a program that awakens every racial pride, every Old World prejudice, every inherited aspiration, and are rending the concord of American spirit which once promised to be the great compensation for all our sacrifices. This is no idle fancy. Justice, only simple justice, and liberty, God's own bequest of liberty, were on every lip, and there was no perfunctory utterance among those who appealed to the Senate through our committee. There was deep feeling no words could belie and that sincerity for which men die, and as I listened I deplored the eloquence of speech unperformed, which leads hope to flame high, then die in disappointment. And, sirs, I doubly deplored the proposals and pretenses that open anew the cleavage in the consecration of our adopted American citizenship.

Senators, it is a great thing to be eloquent and persuasive in speech, but it is also a very dangerous thing. I mean to be quite as respectful as I am sincere when I say that our present involvement and our further entanglement and most of the world's restlessness and revolution and threatened revolution are largely traceable to prewar utterances and war-time pronouncements. Once before in this Chamber I challenged some

of the statements as to why we went to war. I speak of it again now, because the President told the people of my State that our soldiers were "drafted for the very purpose of ending war," and this league as negotiated is the only thing that will do it. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone that we might appeal to the pride of the peoples of the earth. Still more recently a very eminent authority has proclaimed all opponents of the covenant as "contemptible quitters if they do not see the game through."

Mr. President, I turned to the RECORD of Congress for that fateful 6th of April, 1917, when this body voted the declaration of war against Germany. It had occurred to me that perhaps the resolution itself would give the official reason for going to war, as Congress would prefer history to record it. I turned to the preamble to the official declaration, and there is given the reason in the simplest language that words can express:

Whereas the Imperial German Government has committed repeated acts of war against the Government and the people of the United States of America, therefore be it resolved,

And so forth.

There is the whole story. Nothing there especially proclaiming democracy or humanity, because both had been fighting, sacrificing, and dying for more than two and a half years and we neither saw nor heard.

Let me clarify by further quotation from the President. I omit the official proclamation of neutrality in August of 1914, but want to reveal the conscience of America as spoken by him in the following January, when Belgium was devastated and France was bleeding, and Britain was sacrificing her volunteer defenders. I quote from a speech made at Indianapolis, scene of the more recent admonition to "Put up or shut up." Search the quotation for democracy, humanity, "the end of all war," or "the rectified wrongs of history":

Only America at peace! Among all the great powers of the world only America saving her power for her own people. Do you not think it likely that the world will some time turn to America and say, "You were right and we were wrong. You kept your head when we lost ours."—The President, Indianapolis, January 8, 1915.

More than three months passed, and still the conscience of the Republic was unchanged. I quote from the New York speech of the Chief Executive, delivered on April 20, 1915:

I am interested in neutrality because there is something so much greater to do than fight; there is a distinction waiting for this Nation that no nation ever got. That is the distinction of absolute self-control and self-mastery.

Let us, as an act of courtesy, pass the Philadelphia address, delivered three days after the *Lusitania* sinking, when humanity's cry was muffled by the ocean's depths and democracy was too shocked to speak. In December we still "stood apart, studiously neutral—it was our manifest duty." Thus the President spoke. But it is especially interesting to quote from an address delivered at Des Moines, Iowa, on February 1, 1916, at the same place where the "quitters" were so recently gibbeted:

There are actually men in America who are preaching war, who are preaching the duty of the United States to do what it never would before—seek entanglements in the controversies which have arisen on the other side of the water—abandon its habitual and traditional policy and deliberately engage in the conflict which is engulfing the rest of the

world. I do not know what the standards of citizenship of these gentlemen may be. I only know that I for one can not subscribe to those standards.

It was an unspeakable thing to abandon our "habitual and traditional policy" and seek entanglements in Old World controversies then, when actual conflict was threatening our very safety, but "only the selfishness or ignorance or a spirit of Bolshevism" is debating it now. Surely the American people will not compare without understanding.

We went to war precisely for the reason uttered in the preamble which I quoted, forced to action by the conscience and self-respect of the American people. Perhaps the people were greater than their Government in conscience and self-respect, but they were not great enough to overcome the costly months of delay. But once we were committed it was unalterable. "Quitters" in Congress? They were trampled deep beneath the forward march. Congress submerged itself, abdicated, to give limitless power to the Commander in Chief. No finer surrender of power is recorded in history, no lawful dictatorship offers parallel in the story of free government. I am not complaining, I am commending! It was necessary to speed the winning.

"Quitters" among the people? Not one among the millions of patriotic Americans. We pledged all we had, our wealth, our lives, our sacred honor. It was the committal unalterable. Germany was making war on us, and had to be brought to terms. Let me record it for all time—the unquitting resolution of these United States. Suppose poor, weak but proud and brave Serbia had been trampled to earth and utterly destroyed; suppose brave, heroic Belgium had been driven wholly into the sea and none but her enslaved people remained to cherish the story of her opening guns of defense; suppose Italy, resolute and courageous, in spite of her difficulties, had been brought to terms; suppose Russia in her betrayal had joined her German masters and sought to destroy the world's civilization as she did her own; suppose noble, heroic, self-sacrificing, respiritualized France had been brought to her knees, wounded unto death; suppose determined, fearless, and powerful Great Britain had been starved and brought to terms as the Central Powers had planned; suppose all these disasters had attended, then, even then, this Republic would have gone on and on and on until Germany was brought to terms, because without established American rights there could be no American Nation, and we had rather perish than fail to maintain them.

No, Senators, there were no "quitters" after the task was once assumed. We finished in triumph. An arrogant, offending military Germany is no more. That job was well done. But after it was done, having no concern for Europe's affairs, seeking nothing of territory, nothing of reparation—and getting none, let it be said—the sons of the Republic wanted to come home, and the people of the United States wanted them home, and it was in the great heart of the Republic to turn to the restoration, reestablish our normal pursuits, and make the earliest recovery possible from the ravages and extravagances and wastes and sorrows of war.

That is not a "quitter's" program. That was distinctly and becomingly the American policy, the wish of highest American

devotion. We had never entered any alliances. The treaty speaks again and again of the "principal allied and associated powers." We were the "associated power," because when Germany committed her acts of war against us, we joined the warfare of the Allies against her and made common cause against the common enemy. We had no compacts, no covenants, no secret arrangements. Alas! We did not even know the secret agreements the Allies had. It would have little mattered, perhaps, had we not proclaimed overmuch against secret agreements and proposed a new birth for all the world.

We did cooperate. We fought under French command, and our soldiers were comrades to French, to Italian, to Belgian, and to British, because we were battling for the defeat of a common enemy. We paid our own way to the last farthing. We gave of treasure without reckoning, and Americans died not as allies but as Americans. That was the one supreme consolation in every hero's last living thought. Crusaders, seeking a human relationship that God Himself hath not wrought? No! They were heroic defenders of these United States.

It may be recorded, Senators, that America finished the task for which her sons were sent to Europe, and the unfinished work which is now alleged is an afterthought, to which America was never committed, about which our people were never consulted, concerning which our very peace commissioners were not advised. No one questions the lofty aims of President Wilson, no one would hinder consistent endeavor for all desirable attainment. No one opposes because the American participation is exclusively Wilsonian, or because the covenant is of British conception. It is the covenant itself and the effect of our committal which calls for consideration.

It is appropriate, however, to dispel some of the illusions about it being the expressed hope and guaranteed security of small nations and struggling peoples. They had no voice in its making. Their protests were stilled at the moment of its adoption. Eyewitnesses to the submission of this super-concept to the peace commissioners testify that this "covenant is a perversion of what men who really favored a league of nations intended and wished for." I quote Mr. Frank P. Walsh, once its ardent supporter, now protesting its adoption. When Mr. Walsh appeared before our committee he was asked if the assembled peace commissioners, representing nations, great or small, expressed any surprise when the covenant was presented. Mr. Walsh replied:

> Oh, it was very marked. They jumped up all over the place to make protests. Man after man got up. You know there was an awful censorship upon this whole business.

There was no debate. It was the offering of the Big Four, the autocracy of peace, not submitted to debate by the commissioners signing, and is now too sacred for modification by this body which must speak for America. I believe it designed to establish supergovernment, and no explanation nor apology has altered my opinion. It may consider any question affecting the affairs of the world, and the council's decision is a binding thing, else language has no dependable meaning. Supergovernment was the great dream, and the very essentials of supergovernment were incorporated. If one believes in surrendered nationality, if one prefers world citizenship to American citizenship, which

I delight to boast, the covenant is ideal. But it ends democracy instead of promoting it, and it means international autocracy for all who accept it without specific reservations.

The authority, as written, is limitless. Any national sovereignty may be invaded. The authority which can prevent war can make it, and it will. The President has said the council may even consider internal controversies which threaten world peace, and he holds out the promise that the league will correct the injustices of the peace commission which created it. If that does not mean the assumption of power to extend to limitless authority, the promise is not sincere. On the other hand, it means abandoned self-determination for every member nation, and unending interference and invited conflict with nations outside the autocratic circle.

No one has made the venture to estimate our possible obligations. Only last Saturday the cable told us how a member of the French Chamber of Deputies had advocated that the league of nations should assume a proportion of the French war debt. It does not matter that we renounced all reparation ourselves, it does not matter that we expended without measure, it nevertheless appears that in the new idealism there is a "touch" of the practical. Europe is calling for our soldiers and we are sending, though our task was ended last November. Europe wants our sponsorship, to enforce the new alignments, and wants our treasure to lighten her own burdens. Involvement piles upon involvement and responsibility upon responsibility, until independence of action fades into precious memory and nationality becomes a lost inheritance.

Senators, no one in all the land has greater pride than I feel in having this Nation and our people exert a becoming influence on the progressive march of civilization. We can not hope to remain utterly aloof, and would not choose a complete isolation if such a course were possible. We are the exemplars of representative democracy, and have seemingly developed the most dependable popular government in the world. We know that no pure democracy ever survived, and we know that republics have failed before. We ought and do realize that the fundamentals of the United States are not of new discovery, and we are yet but a child among the nations in point of years, though our achievement would glorify centuries of development. My point is that civilization is not exclusively ours, or justice solely an American conception, or righteousness wholly a new world development. We are committed to them all, and we are the best exemplars of unselfishness in the world.

Our merits are appraised and our weaknesses are known. We have power and wealth and conscience; we do have lofty sentiments and high ideals. We would have ours the best example of national righteousness in all the world, and influence the world according to the confidence and respect we command. We do not need Europe or Asia to define our moral obligations, we do not need the Old World to quicken the American conscience. The obligations to civilization are not designated by men, they are written by the hand of divinity which records the onward march. No league, no council of any league, no assembly of any league can ever appeal to the American conscience as will the voice of intelligent and deliberate public opinion. Aye,

and if we proclaim democracy to the world, we must not crush it at its hearthstone.

Must we have this particular covenant to save us from European broils and old-world conflicts, as the President asserts? In a hundred years of American development and growing influence no war involved us, though 126 wars are recorded in that period. We were not involved in 1898; we went because conscience was impelling. I quite agree that Germany might have preferred to respect our rights than to involve us in the late World War if she had believed we would answer affront with armed defense, but the President was too busy then keeping us out of war to utter a vigorous American warning. Germany held us in a contempt which one militant American voice in authority might have dissolved, but we delayed until 2,000,000 fighting sons of the Republic shot Germany to respectful understanding.

We have settled it for all time, league or no league, peace or no peace, war or no war, the rights of this Nation and the rights of our citizens must and will be respected at home or abroad, on land or sea, everywhere an American may go on a lawful and righteous mission under the shining sun. To adopt any other policy, to call an international council to destroy the American spirit, would rend the life of the Republic. It may be very old-fashioned, sirs, it may be reactionary, it may be shocking to pacifist and dreamer alike, but I choose for our own people, a hundred millions or more, the right to search the American conscience and prescribe our own obligations to ourselves and the world's civilization.

Let us pause for a moment to note the tendency of the propagandists of the hour and the proponents of the league. There is a drive to nationalize industry, to denationalize governments, and internationalize the world. All are contrary to everything that made us what we are, all stamp failure on all we have wrought, and propose paralysis instead of the virile activity which sped us on to achievement.

Nationalism was the vital force that turned the dearly wrought freedom of the Republic to a living, impelling power. Nationalism inspired, assured, upbuilded. In nationalism was centered all the hopes, all the confidence, all the aspirations of a developing people. Nationalism has turned the retreating processions of the earth to the onward march to accomplishment, and has been the very shield of democracy wherever its banners were unfurled. Why, Senators, nationality was the hope of every appealing delegation which came to our committee in the name of democracy. It was nationality that conceived the emergence of new nations and the revival of old ones out of the ashes of consuming warfare. Nationality is the call of the heart of liberated peoples, and the dream of those to whom freedom becomes an undying cause. It was the guiding light, the song, the prayer, the consummation for our own people, although we were never assured indissoluble union until the Civil War was fought. Can any red-blooded American consent now, when we have come to understand its priceless value, to merge our nationality into internationality, merely because brotherhood and fraternity and fellowship and peace are soothing and appealing terms?

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Oh, sirs, I know it is denied. I can understand the indignant denial. I will not challenge its sincerity. It would be very disheartening to believe that any American in official position, or who donned the garb of an armed defender, knowingly assents to surrendered nationality. I may be wrong, but I elect to take no chances. If this league as negotiated can do all that its proponents have promised, it can tighten its grip on the destiny of nations and make our inspiring nationality only a memory. Extravagant utterance? Well, establish the council without strong reservations protecting our freedom of action, and establish the assembly with its powers unhindered by reservations, and no man can foresee the exercise of authority by the league of great powers, against whom small nations will protest in vain. Suppose it proves all that is claimed in discouraging war, which many honestly doubt. Let me say in passing that an able and experienced officer of the Army, stalwart in his Americanism and his love of country, whose devotion has been proven again and again, and who not only fought in the late war but is a student of European affairs, said to me not a month ago: "Senator, as a military man I ought to favor this league because it means war after war and constant activity in the work for which I am trained. But I pray in my American heart you will never commit us to it, because I can see involvements and regrets unending."

But suppose it makes for the promised peace, I still prefer, and the great majority of Americans still prefer, to be the keepers of our national conscience and let Europe pass upon its moral obligations while we righteously meet our own.

Only the other day the President called upon the opponents of this league to "Put up or shut up." Among opponents he classes reservationists as well as those who would destroy it all. A good many people have been "putting up" in this country. Perhaps they have a right to speak. But in modified terms the President is uttering that very familiar demand, "if you won't have this, what have you to offer?" It is the well-known call for constructive proposals in place of obstructive discussion. There are times when obstruction justifies the call for something constructive. But this situation, Senators, calls for action preservative. When some one proposes an impossible thing, it is not fit challenge to demand a constructive substitute. The preservation of American safety is the main thing. A safeguarded inheritance is infinitely better than the wasted riches of nationality.

Nobody is going to "shut up." Democracy does not demand such a surrender. Men in this body have a sworn duty to perform, no less important to ratification than presidential authority is to negotiation. A Senator may be as jealous of his constitutional duty as the President is jealous of an international concoction, especially if we cling to the substance as well as the form of representative democracy. The dictatorship was for the war only, and does not abide in the aftermath.

Members of this body are not insensible to the criticism of their actions, official criticism, and the complaints of constituents. There are expressions of approval, too. Men have not been blind to the unusual mail from home; they have appraised letters inspired, letters perfunctory, letters from the heart,

letters urging support, letters breathing deep alarm. I have heard the charge of partisanship and the threat of destroyed party and the prophecy of individual political ignominy. But I record it now, because it ought to be recorded; the soul of this discussion is splendidly patriotic. It is not confined to one side of the Chamber nor to one side of the pending issue. I yield the belief in sincerity even to those who do not grant it. More, the radical, unalterable opponents of the league and the treaty have rendered a real service to this country. I do not agree to all they urge in opposition, but I credit them with the awakening of America, without which the Republic might have been unconsciously betrayed.

To what conclusion am I leading? Speaking for myself alone, voicing no faction, no group, no party, I do not see how any Senator can decide upon his final vote till the disputed amendments and proposed reservations shall have the stamp of the decision of a Senate majority. I can never vote to ratify without safeguards. I am not yet persuaded to cast a ratifying vote without amendments. I have listened to the committee's earnest discussions. I bear witness that there was no fixed program of action in advance. I have sought to retain a fairly open mind, withholding unalterable utterance in the face of the charge of wabbling indecision.

I mean to vote for the amendments proposed by the committee. They ought to be accepted. If the President is correct in declaring the proposed reservations will send the treaty back, then amendments will not unduly delay. Suppose there is delay? Civilized peoples are not supposed to move unthinkingly in creating the surpassing covenant of all the ages. This is an epoch-making treaty, no matter what its terms prescribe.

America need not fear the ill-will of our allied covenanters. Their need for our cooperation is not so critical as when the German armies were battering the western battle fronts, but Europe needs us infinitely more than we need Europe. The aftermath is little less difficult than the problems of war itself. We can carry the banners of America to the new Elysium, even though we have to furl them before we enter.

It is well to do any job right. It is imperative to do a mighty job right, especially when it involves the fate of all civilization. If the world is to start all over, it ought to start with the square deal. The treaty has not written it; the square deal was reserved for informal promises not uttered in the supreme document. Though we performed a great service in armed battling for preserved civilization, we have yet a greater service to render to the same civilization by making the covenant of peace everlastingly righteous.

All fair men realize the embarrassment incident to the Shantung award. Perhaps we can not change it. No one believes we mean to go to war to restore to China what Germany looted and Japan traded for. But we need not be a party to an international immorality that challenges our every utterance about lofty purposes and the reign of justice. I want it recorded, for all the world to read, that America esteems her unarmed friend no less than she respects her armed associate.

If reservations are to send the German treaty and league covenant back, we ought to amend fully, we ought to write into

the text the things which America is thinking. There has been inclination to yield some points rather than necessitate prolonged delay. We now know there are to be reservations, unmistakable reservations, else there will be no treaty. They must speak in clearest terms. The covenant is unthinkable without them. These reservations must be strong and unmistakable. I could no more support "mild reservations" than I could sanction mild Americanism. These reservations come of a purpose to protect America first, and still save a framework on which to build intelligent cooperation. These reservations come of a desire to offer opportunity for a clearing house for the consciences of peoples. These reservations declare that we hold for ourselves the right to maintain our own peace, and are willing to encourage Europe's effort toward the great desideratum. But in these reservations there must be no surrender of the basic things on which this Nation was builded to the present-day height of world eminence.

Without the amendments we shall be remiss in uttering the conscience of the Republic; without any reservations we shall be recreant to duty. This is not the universal thought. There is dispute about it being the majority thought of the American millions, but I believe it will become the deliberate judgment of America.

If such a course delays reconstruction, let reconstruction wait. It awaited the long negotiation at Paris, it waited amid barter, it can await correction where the blunder was made. You have heard the call of finance, voicing its impatience. Let finance recall that fundamental Americanism transcends its importance for to-day and the morrow, too. Industry calls for normal conditions of formal peace. Let industry remember that nationalism is its fostering influence, and internationalism means to merge its interests with the industries of the world. Momentous achievements are not wrought in impatience.

Out of the ferment, the turmoil, the debts, and echoing sorrows; out of the appalling waste and far-reaching disorder; out of the threats against orderly government and the assaults on our present-day civilization, I think I can see the opening way for America. We must preserve the inheritance and hold sensitive the conscience which has guided our national life. We must cling to just government and hold to intelligent and deliberate public opinion as shield and buckler to representative democracy. We must hold to civil liberty, no matter who assails or in what garb he appears, and we must hold equal opportunity and the reward of merit no less vital to a living Republic than liberty itself.

We do not need and we do not mean to live within and for ourselves alone, but we do mean to hold our ideals safe from foreign incursion. We have commanded respect and confidence, commanded them in friendship and the associations of peace, commanded them in the conflicts and comradeships of war. It is easily possible to hold the world's high estimate through righteous relationships. If our ideals of civilization are the best in the world, and I proudly believe that they are, then we ought to send the American torch bearers leading on to fulfillment. America aided in saving civilization; Americans will not fail civilization in the deliberate advancements of peace. We are willing to give, but we resent demands.

I do not believe, Senators, that it is going "to break the heart of the world" to make this covenant right, or at least free from perils which would endanger our own independence. But it were better to witness this rhetorical tragedy than destroy the soul of this great Republic.

It is a very alluring thing, Mr. President, to do what the world has never done before. No republic has permanently survived. They have flashed, illumined, and advanced the world, and faded or crumbled. I want to be a contributor to the abiding Republic. None of us to-day can be sure that it shall abide for generations to come, but we may hold it unshaken for our day, and pass it on to the next generation preserved in its integrity. This is the mending call of duty to men of every civilization; it is distinctly the American call to duty to every man who believes we have come the nearest to dependable popular government the world has yet witnessed.

Let us have an America walking erect, unafraid, concerned about its rights and ready to defend them, proud of its citizens and committed to defend them, and sure of its ideals and strong to support them. We are a hundred millions and more to-day, and if the miracle of the first century of national life may be repeated in the second the millions of to-day will be the myriads of the future. I like to think, sirs, that out of the discovered soul of this Republic and through our preservative actions in this supreme moment of human progress we shall hold the word American the proudest boast of citizenship in all the world.

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